61. Travelling Allowance. The revision of the travelling allowance rules, referred to in paragraph 58 of my last year's address, has recently been sanctioned, and the revised rules have been brought into force tentatively for a period of eighteen months from the 1st Kumbham, 1100. The chief features of this revision are the elimination of the special rates for particular officers specified in Appendix III of the Service Regulations and the raising of the minimum rate of daily allowance from eight to fourteen chackrams in the case of superior servants and from six to ten chackrams in the case of inferior servants. All public servants, except menials, who travel by public conveyances, have been declared eligible only for double the actual fare paid by them, and they have been debarred from claiming mileage in respect of such journeys.

Local Self-Government.

62. Municipalities. The nineteen Municipal Councils of the State, which were constituted in Kanni, 1097, under the provisions of Regulation V of 1095, completed their term of three years in the early part of the current year, and fresh Councils have taken their places. The present aggregate strength of the Councils is 307, of which number 54 alone are nominated official members, recruited mainly from the Medical and Public Works Departments for the purpose of giving technical advice, while the remaining 253 are non-officials, mostly elected. All the Councils, except that of Trivandrum, now elect their own non-official Presidents and Vice-Presidents. The extension of this privilege to the Trivandrum Municipal Council awaits amendments to the Municipal Regulation enabling the entertainment of a Chief Executive Officer.

63. The minor roads and streets within the towns of Alleppey and Nagercoil, which were handed over to the respective Municipal Councils under the conditions mentioned in paragraph 61 of my address last year, were maintained by them in 1099; and the Nagercoil Municipal Council spent as much as Rs. 10,498 for carrying out important public works such as the widening of lanes and the improvement of streets. Encouraged by the example of these two Councils, the Councils of Quilon, Kottayam and Parur have expressed their willingness to take over the maintenance of minor roads and streets within their jurisdiction on similar conditions, and their proposals are now under the consideration of the Government. In the matter of incurring expenditure on education, the Councils of Alwaye and Attingal have stolen a march over the other Councils by undertaking each to maintain an English middle school for girls. The Council of Alwaye is also subsidising a grant-in-aid *Vaidyasala* within its jurisdiction, while the Kottayam and Alwaye Councils are subsidising a grant-in-aid *Vishavaidyasala* each in those towns. The Councils of Trivandrum, Quilon and Padmanabhapuram have made arrangements for holding night schools. Trivandrum has hitherto been the only Council watering the main roads of the town during the hot weather, but Quilon and Kottayam have also now proposed to do the same. The Municipal Council of Quilon has, as I have already said, added to its staff a lady health visitor, while the Alleppey Municipal Council has given a substantial grant to the recently started Health and Child Welfare Association in the town. Some of the Councils, notably Nagercoil, have begun to exhibit commendable activity in the development of their resources by undertaking quasi-commercial enterprises like opening new markets and cart-stands. These facts show that the Municipal Councils are no longer content to sit still and attend only to sanitation but are starting new lines of advance which will make their existence more beneficial to the people committed to their charge. The Government have been allowing these self-governing institutions the utmost possible measure of freedom and they realise that any forcing of the pace of progress is neither desirable nor expedient. The receipts and the expenditure of Municipalities have risen from Rs. 2,05,980 and Rs. 2,13,553 to Rs. 3,28,138 and Rs. 3,25,579, respectively, within the last four years.

64. Panchayat and Bench Courts. The number of cases disposed of by the Village Panchayat Courts has risen from 4,541 to 9,944 within the last four years. Some of the Panchayat Courts were, as you are aware, constituted in 1098 into Bench Courts for the trial of criminal cases. Four first class and four second

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class Bench Magistrates' Courts were working at the end of 1098, while two more second class courts were added in the early part of 1099. The number of criminal cases disposed of by the Bench Magistrates rose from 5,056 in 1098 to 6,946 in 1099, while the number pending at their close fell from 815 to 432. On an average, each Bench Court had to deal with nearly 700 cases in the year 1099, which exceeds the average number of cases triable in a year in a stipendiary Magistrate's Court. The success and popularity of these courts are a powerful argument for a further increase in their number.

65. Village Panchayats. The Village Panchayat Bill has just been passed by the Legislative Council and it will come into force from the beginning of next year. Sanitation, the cleaning of streets, the construction and maintenance of wells and tanks for the supply of drinking water to the public, the opening and maintenance of burial and burning grounds, and the control and management of cattle pounds will be the obligatory duties of the Panchayats to be constituted under this enactment; while primary education, the lighting of public ways, the relief of the poor, the improvement of agriculture, the promotion of cottage industries, the restoration of minor irrigation works, vaccination, and the registration of births and deaths will come under their discretionary duties. The Panchayats will impose a cess on land or any other rate, tax, cess or fee, not exceeding the maxima to be prescribed by the Government, for raising a portion of the finances that may be required for the discharge of the duties they undertake; and the Government will contribute an amount which shall not be less than three-fourths of the sanctioned budget expenditure for each year during the first five years, or less than one-half of it thereafter. These Panchayats may also be constituted as Village Benches for the trial of petty offences. The passing of this measure marks another distinctly forward step in the path of local self-government; and a vitally important step it is, as it places, in the hands of the people themselves, the materials and the weapons for the rural reconstruction that the country so badly needs to-day, and it is for the people in whose hands they have been placed to use them to the utmost advantage to themselves.

Finance.

66. The revenue for the year 1099 amounted to Rs. 199·54 lakhs and the expenditure charged to revenue to Rs. 195·48 lakhs, leaving a surplus of Rs. 4·06 lakhs, against an anticipated surplus of Rs. 2·19 lakhs. The corresponding figures for 1098 were Rs. 195·87 lakhs, Rs. 188·27 lakhs, and Rs. 7·60 lakhs. The revenue for 1099 would have been better by about Rs. 3 lakhs (Rs. 2 lakhs under 'excise' and Rs. 1 lakh under 'customs') and the year would have closed with a larger surplus but for the disastrous floods of last Karkatakam which disorganised trade and disabled abkari renters from paying their dues. It must, however, be mentioned that the revenue and expenditure for the years 1098 and 1099 include certain special items which have to be eliminated before a correct idea of the State's ordinary income and expenditure can be formed. These extraordinary items are the receipts from enhanced salt duty amounting to Rs. 5·07 lakhs in 1098 and Rs. 6·58 lakhs in 1099, and the expenditure on account of the *Murajapam* ceremony amounting to Rs. ·40 lakh in 1098 and Rs. 4·57 lakhs in 1099. Excluding these items, the ordinary revenue, expenditure and surplus for the two years would be as follow:—

Year.	*Revenue.*	*Expenditure.*	*Surplus.*
1098	190·80	187·87	2·93
1099	192·96	190·91	2·05

67. The most important increase in the ordinary receipts of 1099 was under 'forests'. The chief increases under ordinary expenditure in 1099 were under 'education' (Rs. 2·15 lakhs) and 'public works' (Rs. 3·33 lakhs). As the result of close scrutiny and strict economy, the expenditure on 'contingencies', which stood at Rs. 28·5 lakhs in 1097, was brought down to Rs. 24·37 lakhs in 1098 and to Rs. 21·72 lakhs in 1099, while the expenditure under 'stationery' was reduced to the extent of Rs. 1·4 lakhs in 1098 and of Rs. 2·65 lakhs in 1099.

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